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Soviets Underestimated 3

A warning not to be taken lightly can be found in the testimony of Gen. Walter Bedell Smith before the Senate Armed Services subcommittee.

Gen. Smith was Gen. Eisenhower's chief of staff during World War II and then headed the Central Intelligence Agency, America's "spy service," after the war.

The retired Army officer admitted that he and "a great number of others" underestimated the Soviets' capacity to arm following World War II. He made the statement to underline his conviction that Russia now can compete on an even footing with the United States in turning out trained personnel and in producing modern weapons.

Gen. Smith's testimony affirms what has been increasingly obvious over the years—that Russia's inventions and technological advances on such things as the A-bomb and the H-bomb have repeatedly surprised us. If the "spy service" of our country was unaware of these advances, it is no wonder our government and our people were caught flat-footed.

In war and preparation for war there is nothing more dangerous than underestimating the capabilities of the foe. This very thing led both Germany and Japan into wars that proved disastrous.

The lesson should not be taken lightly as America girds her defenses for any future eventuality.